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TAGS: PREL PGOV PTER EG SO

SUBJECT: (C) SOMALI DIPLOMAT REPORTS ON ISLAMIST HASSAN AWEYS' CAIRO VISIT

Classified by Acting DCM William R. Stewart for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Somali diplomat Ismail A. Hussein told poloffs on November 16 that Egyptian General Intelligence Service (EGIS) officials informed the Somali Embassy in Cairo about the visit of Somali Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) leader Hassan Dahir Aweys on the day of his arrival in Egypt. While Arab League contacts acknowledged the Aweys visit, our normal Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) contacts have avoided any discussion of the issue, likely given Aweys' UNSCR 1267 terror-related listing. Hussein said that he spoke to one of Aweys' delegation during the visit, who said the Islamist leader met with senior EGIS officials, Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit, and the Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar. Hussein did not have a readout of the discussions, but accused Egypt of assisting the CIC via Eritrean channels. According to the British Embassy in Cairo, the British did not send a letter to the GoE protesting the Aweys visit, but rather are mulling over referring the case to the UN Somalia Sanctions Committee. End Summary.

Aweys in Cairo

¶2. (C) Despite complete silence on the issue from our regular MFA contacts, Somali Embassy Consul Ismail Hussein told poloffs on November 16 that Somali Islamist leader Hassan Dahir Aweys visited Egypt in early November along with a group of CIC members for talks with senior Egyptian officials. Zeid El Sabban, Advisor for African Affairs in the Cabinet of the Secretary General of the Arab League, also acknowledged Aweys' visit to poloff, hinting that he had also met with the delegation. Hussein said that EGIS called to inform the Somali Ambassador about the visit on the day that Aweys arrived. The EGIS contacts reportedly said Egypt was hosting Aweys in order to press the CIC to peacefully resolve the ongoing conflict in Somalia. The GoE did not provide the Somali Embassy with a readout of the Cairo talks, but Hussein said he spoke with one of Aweys' delegation while in Cairo, who told him that Aweys met with senior EGIS officials, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar Tantawi, and others.

UNSC Report on Somalia

¶3. (C) Asked about a UNSC report on Somalia which alleges GoE material support to the CIC, Hussein accused Egypt of providing the CIC with military training and other material support. Egypt, he said, is funneling support for the CIC via Eritrea. Hussein also accused the Arab League of doing Egypt's bidding with respect to its efforts at mediation between the CIC and the TFG. Asked for substantiation of his allegations, Hussein cited TFG intelligence reports from

Mogadishu, and asserted that "we are all Somalis; this type of activity cannot be hidden."

UK Mulling Referral To UN

¶4. (C) According to the British Embassy in Cairo, the British did not send a letter to the GoE to protest the Aweys visit but rather are considering bringing the issue to the UN Somalia Sanctions Committee. Egyptian MFA contacts confirmed that the British did not send them a letter. British Embassy poloff Martin Hetherington told poloff on November 21 that London is considering how to proceed but has not to date instructed its Cairo mission to demarche the GoE.

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